

THE
S P E E C H

OF A YOUNG

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MEMBER of PARLIAMENT,

ON THE

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Debate of the SEPTENNIAL BILL.



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D. U. B. I. M.

Printed in the U.S.A. by

George F. Smith

T H E
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OF A YOUNG

MEMBER of PARLIAMENT.

S I R,

THIS Question has, in my Apprehension, been already very fully spoke to, by my worthy Friend, who spoke last in this Debate ; and therefore, Sir, I shall be able to add very little new Matter to what he has said : But, in what I shall take the Liberty to offer to the Consideration of the House, I shall endeavour to confine myself to such Observations, as are more particularly applicable to this Kingdom ; because, I apprehend, that the Operation of the Law, now under your Consideration, will affect this Country, from the Circumstances peculiar to it, in a Manner very different from that, wherein the neighbouring Country is affected by such a Law, which now is, and for several Years has been, of force therein.

Sir, I apprehend, that in all Cases, the only true Method of judging, whether a Bill brought into this House, ought to be passed into a Law, or not, is to consider, What may be the various Effects, which the proposed Law will have, and in what Manner it will operate upon the real, material Interest and well-being of the Community ; that, by weighing the Advantages which are expected to be gained by the new Law, against the Mischiefs and Inconveniencies that it will introduce, we may determine coolly, Whether it be better for the Public in general, to make the change proposed by the new Law, or to leave Matters as they are.

Sir, having laid down the Rule, whereby I propose to examine and judge of the Law now before us ; I shall beg leave, shortly to consider a few Particulars, relative to the State of the Manufactures and Agriculture of this Kingdom, as, in my Apprehension, the Law now under your Consideration must have a great Effect upon both. Sir, I apprehend, that the most useful and essential Members of Society, and most deserving of the public Attention, are Husbandmen and Manufacturers. The Industry of these Classes of Men is the very
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Foundation of the Wealth and Prosperity of every Country ; and, Sir, it is the real Desire that I have to encourage these useful Members of Society, as well as to protect and defend them, from every Impediment that can be thrown in the Way of their Improvement, on which alone the Improvement of the Kingdom depends, that has principally moved me to consider the Consequences of introducing the Law proposed into this Country.

Sir, it is but too well known, that the Husbandry of *Ireland*, is in a very low and unimproved Condition ; and the same may be said of all our great Manufactures, the Linen excepted, and the improved State of that important Manufacture, is limited to but a small Part of the Kingdom ; but, Sir, all our Manufactures taken together, when compared with those of the neighbouring Country, will appear but a very inconsiderable Object, and the Condition of them but very weak and imperfect, and by no Means able to bear up against the Disadvantages of this Law.

For, Sir, every Gentleman knows, that Wealth alone can give Vigour and Extent, both to our Agriculture and Manufactures ; and, Sir, it is equally evident, that it is
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Industry and Care alone, with the Assistance of the Merchant Exporter, that can bring Wealth into any Country. It is these Considerations, Sir, that induce me to speak against this Bill ; for almost every Argument that has weighed with me in the Consideration of this Question, is grounded entirely upon the necessary Effect, that the introducing this Law must have upon the principal Part of our Manufacturers. Sir, in a Country circumstanced as ours is (which I have shortly hinted at) the introducing any temptation to Idleness, Neglect, Drunkenness, or Dissipation, is the most dangerous, because the most incurable Wound, that can be given the present languid State of its Manufactures and Husbandry, as well as one of the most unfurmountable Stops, that can be put to the Progress of both ; and consequently to the real Prosperity of this Kingdom : If, Sir, there was no other Reason but this one, against this Law, I should certainly vote against it, more especially as I do not see any one good Effect, that can follow to this Kingdom particularly, from the passing it ; for, I hope to be able to shew you, before I conclude, that the supposed Security of the Liberty of the
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People, arising from it, cannot be aided by this Law, in this Country.

Sir, the next Reason that I am against this Bill, arises from a Proceeding upon our late general Election, and which is as peculiar to this Kingdom, as it is dangerous to it; and though my worthy Friend has touched upon it, yet, in my Apprehension, it deserves to be much more fully spoke to. The Proceeding I mean, Sir, is the imposing Conditions, exacting Promises by the Electors from Candidates, and Candidates voluntarily promising to vote for this very Bill, upon Condition of being chosen to serve in Parliament: I say, Sir, this Proceeding, and the Doctrine grounded thereon, that Electors have a legal Right, to impose upon, and exact such Engagements from Candidates, if it should now pass away, without receiving, in a most emphatical and explicit Manner, not only the Disapprobation, but, as far as may be, the Censure of this House; I make not the least Doubt, but from this single Cause (if it be permitted to take effect) in future Times, the absolute and total Ruin of the Constitution must necessarily follow.

Sir, in order to shew this, I shall take the Liberty to lay it down as a Principle,
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that the Power delegated by the Electors to the Representatives, is not only to deliberate upon, and judge of what Instructions or Informations the Representative may receive, from his particular constituents; but also to deliberate upon, and judge of whatever may be offered in Parliament, for or against the Measures, which his particular Constituents may suggest, and upon the Whole, to vote for what appears to him, to be for the general Good of the Kingdom; and the Member is bound to give his Vote according to his own Judgment, formed upon the Matter, as it shall appear to him to operate upon the whole Kingdom in General; and is not bound, nor ought he to give his Vote according to the Instructions of his Constituents, unless such Instructions appear to the Members own Judgment, to be for the general Good of the Kingdom, without any Regard being had, how it may affect the particular Burrow, or County, represented by such Member.

Sir, I apprehend I have truly laid down the Power, delegated to every Member of this House; because, any Power, less than a Power to deliberate and judge for the whole Kingdom, after considering the particular

particular Interests of the Parts, would not constitute a Member of Parliament, according to the Constitution of this Kingdom. If, Sir, I have truly stated the constitutional Power of a Member of Parliament, I beg leave to say, any Condition imposed upon, or Promise exacted from, any Member of this House, upon his Election, is absolutely null and void in itself; because every such Condition, Limitation, and Promise is totally inconsistent with, and contradicts, the very Power granted, and by the Constitution intended to be granted, at the very Time of the Election: For, the arbitrary Will of the People alone, cannot alter the Constitution.

And, Sir, it is absurd to say, that the Electors meant to make a Representative with less powers, than, by the Constitution, every Representative must have, or, Sir, we can be no Parliament; for an Assembly of People, with less Powers than I have laid down, may be an Assembly of *Dutch* Deputies, but they are no Parliament. And, therefore, Sir, I say, all such Promises, Limitations, and Conditions, are totally and constitutionally void; being inconsistent with, and contrary to the constitutional Power of Parliaments.

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If, Sir, I have proved (and I flatter myself that I have) that all Promises exacted from, all Conditions imposed upon, and all Promises made by Candidates, are contrary to the Constitution, because inconsistent with it; I do not apprehend, that it will require many Arguments, to prevail upon Gentlemen to put an effectual Stop, if possible, to such Attempts for the Future. I shall not take upon me to say, who was the mistaken Man, that first contrived rashly to propagate this Doctrine; but, Sir, it is a Doctrine so fundamentally subversive of the Constitution, that in Charity to the Inventor of it, I must suppose he either did not understand, or did not perceive, the pernicious Consequences of it; for surely, Sir, if he had, there is no Man abandoned enough, for his own private Ambition, so entirely to subvert the very Essence of Parliament.

Sir, there is one Instance of the Effects of this unconstitutional pernicious Doctrine, that I cannot pass by without some Notice; altho' it be with real grief of Heart. Sir, it gives me, and I believe it must give every thinking Man, very sensible Concern, when he recollects with what Ardour

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this Doctrine was embraced, and the Proceeding thereon executed, by the young Gentlemen in the University. Sir, the want of Consideration natural to their time of Life, the Fire of their Imaginations, and want of Experience, plead their Excuse. But, Sir, at the same Time, the Effect this Doctrine has had in that Place, makes it by so much the more alarming, as it is the Fountain, out of which the Members of this House must be supplied, when the present Members of it shall pass away. And, therefore, it is highly incumbent upon this House, to discuss and explain this Doctrine, and, as far as they have Power, to extinguish and censure any Attempt of the like Kind for the Future. Sir, I come now to apply what I have taken the Liberty to offer, to such Members of this House, as are under any Promise or Limitation. And, Sir, in my Opinion, every Man who votes for this Bill, in consequence of such a Promise, does, as far as in him lies, vote for the Subversion of the constitutional Power of Parliament. Sir, I do not doubt, but some of the Candidates from whom such Promises were exacted, might and did think, at the Time of making such Promise, that it was not any Way inconsistent

with the constitutional Power of Parliament. Yet, Sir, if what I have taken the Liberty to say, touching this Power be true, it now clearly appears, that any such Engagement is totally inconsistent therewith; and therefore, every such Member is more particularly bound to vote against this Bill; unless it really appears to him to be a Bill, that will contribute to the Prosperity and Welfare of this Kingdom. But I must say, that altho' he may vote for this Bill, from a Conviction of this Sort, yet, I must insist upon it, that no Promise exacted, or idly and unprovidently made, ought to determine him to vote for it, all such Promises, and Engagements, being absolutely unconstitutional. I say, Sir, he ought to pay no Regard to any such Promise, either unnecessarily given, or improperly exacted, it being a less Mischief to depart from such a Promise than to perform it; because, by adhering to it, he does, as far as in him lies, establish the Propriety of all such imposed Promises, and fixes a Precedent for future Times to go by, in a Point totally inconsistent with the Constitutional Power of Parliament; than which there cannot be a greater Mischief! And there

is no Gentleman who hears me, but must admit, that Arguments drawn from the greater Evil, in all public Matters, must, and ought for ever, to out-weigh, all Arguments drawn from the lesser; and there can be as little doubt, which is the greater Evil, to subvert any Part of the constitutional Power of Parliament, or depart from an illegal, and anti-constitutional Promise, which the People have no right to exact, nay, even supposing such Promise to have been voluntarily made.

Sir, this very Doctrine, and the dangerous Consequences, which appear to me necessarily to follow from it, is with me another powerful Reason against this Bill. For, in my Apprehension, the rejecting this Bill, will be one of the most effectual Remedies, against the Establishment of the evil Effects of this Doctrine, by preventing the Electors, as far as possible, from having any Opportunity of making the like Attempt; because, Sir, as my worthy Friend has already hinted, there is no knowing, where the Electors will think themselves bound to stop, if any sudden Opportunity be given to them to go on. Sir, I am aware, that it may be objected, that seven Years are not to be called a sudden Opportunity; but,

but, Sir, all the Answer I shall give to that Objection, will be to put Gentlemen in mind of the Phrenzy which seized the People of this Metropolis in the Year 1749, at the Instigation of a then supposed Parliament Orator; and to recollect what has happened in the Year 1761; and, perhaps, when Gentlemen compare these two Periods of Time, with their respective Events, they may be brought to think, that seven Years will not be a sufficient Time, for the deluded People to perceive the Mischiefs, of this new and favourite Doctrine.

Sir, I should have past over this Period in Silence, but that it appears to me, to have affected the Manufacturers of this City, in a most especial Manner. Sir, I cannot but lament, that the Metropolis of the Kingdom is the principal Seat of the Manufacturers thereof, when they are already loaded, with the natural Disadvantage of burning imported Fire, consuming imported Malt, and, many Times, of eating imported Bread: For these Reasons, I wish, our Manufacturers were settled in the more internal Parts of the Country: But, Sir, let them be settled wheresoever they may, it is our Duty, to protect and
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guard them from, instead of adding to their natural Disadvantages, the Artificial, and greatest of all Mischiefs, the Idleness, Dissipation, Caballing, and Intriguing incident to Elections. And, Sir, to prevent, as much as in me lies, this Mischief to our Manufacturers, is another Reason why I am against this Bill.

Sir, there is but one Point more, with which I shall trouble the House at this Time, and if I am right therein, and in the Consequences which I have drawn from it in my own Mind, in my Apprehension, it takes away any Sort of Utility from this Bill, in this Country.

Sir, the only Thing I have ever heard offered in favour of this Bill, that seems to me to be a solid Reason for it, is, that it secures the Liberty of the Subject; and I most readily grant that to be one good Reason. But, Sir, in my Apprehension, we in this Country, do not stand in need of any such Law to protect our Liberties. Because, I take it for granted, that the Advocates for this Bill will readily call it, the Bulwark of the Liberties of the People of *England*; and, for Argument's Sake, I will grant it to be so. Now, Sir, it is certain, that this Country is so closely,
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and inseparably connected with *England*, that it is impossible for it ever to preserve it's Liberty, one Hour after the Liberty of *England* is taken away: And, Sir, there is no Reason to suppose, that we shall ever lose ours, whilst that of *England* remains. The Consequence of which is, that if this Law be of such real Benefit to *England*, *Ireland* necessarily enjoys all the possible Advantage, which can flow from it, without being exposed, to any one of the Mischiefs, or Inconveniencies which attend it in that Kingdom; and, Sir, whatever the Advantages of it may be in *England*, it cannot be denied, but, that there are many Mischiefs, and public Inconveniencies attending it there; every one of which we shall be freed from, by rejecting this Bill, and this, Sir, to me, is an unanswerable Reason, why we ought to reject this Bill, for the doing of which, I shall most heartily give my Voice.

F I N I S.

